7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

must announce his arrival at the gate so that the mother can cover the child from view. In this period, the mother sleeps with the child apart from her husband.

Infants remain swaddled in wrapped skirt pieces—the woman's sash is not used after the first fifteen days—throughout the first year of life. Their arms are bound to their sides by kerchiefs crossed over the chest and drawn around the back with the ends tucked in; this makes it easier to carry the child on the back, wrapped in a large carrying cloth. Mothers sometimes lay sleeping infants on their bed when they are working in the house, but much of the time they carry them on their backs.

The child is given corn gruel to supplement nursing during his third or fourth month. Weaning may be consciously done after the child reaches the age of one and a half or two years. If the child persists in trying to nurse, the mother may put chile sauce or draw a face on her breasts to discourage him.

Much of the care of children from two to four years of age is done by elder siblings. Both girls and boys of from seven to ten years of age carry younger siblings in a carrying cloth on their backs, even when playing very active games. They pacify the child by holding a flower or twig for him to chew or grasp, and they usually share with him any cookies or scraps of food they are given.

School is commonly considered the most joyful time of a person's life. There the children, especially boys, make friendships which last throughout life. School recess is a time for unrestrained running, shouting, and laughter such as I have rarely seen in the houseyards when children play together.

In teaching their children how to work, parents are expected to inculcate not only competence but also a sense of the value of work, for industry is one of the most esteemed traits in both boys and girls. Small girls do errands for their mothers from the age of about four years. When a woman is occupied with pottery, she rarely disturbs herself to get needed items, but calls upon her children to fetch a pot which is out of reach or to bring water for the painting. She gives these orders in a quiet undertone, and I have never seen any need to prompt or cajole the child into fulfilling the errand. By the age of ten or eleven, girls begin to make small pots like

858 mother's womb, and they compete for survival with other small
854 babies who live close by (one of the two is likely to die). They
754 are extremely susceptible to the mal de ojo (evil eye)[1] because their souls are tender, and they are, for the same reason, easy victims of witchcraft exercised against their parents. During the first few months of life, they are protected and cared for with innumerable precautions: they are covered up when strangers enter the house, attended at the slightest sign of distress, and
[513] rarely taken out of the sitio. Until another child is born, they sleep with the parents on the same petate (mat) or bed.

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• 86[illegible] When a mother is ready to have a new baby, the younger one is given to an elder sister or grandmother with whom it can sleep. The baby is also weaned at this time. The separation of the child from the mother is an open traumatic experience, and parents admit that children get sick and even die as a result of "jealousy." Nevertheless, no direct attempt is made to smooth the emotional disturbances or the developing sibling rivalry in

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[826] [843] [841] [1] The evil eye has been described innumerable times for Middle America. In the Chiapas Highlands it is a sickness caused by a person with strong or "hot" eyes, who looks at the victim. Evil eye "carriers" are not necessarily aware of their power, but some individuals are consciously included in this category: pregnant women, menstruating women, and people with glasses or light eyes, or with very deep set eyes. To avoid giving mal de ojo," the producer has to touch the person who can be a victim. If a menstruating woman distractedly looks at a small baby, she will immediately put her hand on the baby's forehead, to retrieve from him her power, and not make him sick.

The same procedure of touching the person is done if the other person feels that he is unwillingly "envying" the first one, and can be an unconscious witchcraft mediator. For example, if a married woman without babies sees another woman's baby, she will touch him to show that she is not "envying" the mother, and therefore, there is no danger that she will "steal" the baby's soul or make him sick with her envy.

855 the elder child, except that they allow the child some freedom
862 to run around the sitio, or go outside the sitio with other adults
883 in order to go visiting.[1]

The adolescent children, especially those going to school, have complete freedom of movement within the community. They are sent to visit their grandmothers, to deliver little presents, or they are sent to ask for borrowed things. They also bring news and gossip back and forth between households. Their role as [585] messengers is sometimes formalized, as during weddings when children are sent ahead to announce the arrival of the bride, and her family, to the groom's household.

857 Pre-adolescent girls have the responsibility of caring for
868 their younger siblings, and are initiated into the woman's work
562 at an early age. They are trained by their mothers in making tortillas, carrying water, sweeping and sewing. They can go visiting on their own, and play outside the home with other girls before and after school, if they are regular school goers.

882 After the first menstruation (and sometimes a little before
562 if they show signs of maturity), they change from the light cotton
[291] skirt into the traditional dark blue nagua (tubular skirt) and red faja (sash), and are considered marriageable (solteritas or tek' el). At this point, they are expected to stay within the homestead grounds, except if they are told to bring water or if they go with compañía (company) to the afternoon rezo (praying

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[1] In extreme cases, when the elder child shows extreme signs of distress (crying long hours and refusing to eat anything), it will be given to a woman relative living in other household, usually the paternal grandmother or a married sister without children. This, however, is extremely rare.